

Distinguish members of the committee, I am John Griffith, Past Commander of Carleton VFW Post 4093 located in Carleton, MI, and currently the Sr. Vice Commander of the 6th District, Department of Michigan Veterans of Foreign Wars.

I am here to speak on behalf of the former and give the committee some idea of the impact the current charity gaming regulations have had, not only upon VFW Post 4093, but as a result our community and why your support of SB 187 is so important. I promise that my remarks will be brief and to the point.

HB 4203

Our VFW Post has been in continuous existence since 1946 and has been an integral part of our community since its charter and continues to have a significant impact on not only upon our veterans, and the entire Ash Township community.

Aside from our support to military personnel deployed overseas and our veteran members, we also support our community here at home. Just a few of the contributions to our community include:

- Providing a meeting place for Senior Citizens of Ash Township.
- Our post contributes to the local Good fellow's Food Closet.
- We are the Charter Organization for and financially support Cub Scout Pack 522 and Boy Scout Troop 566 both of which organizations also contribute to community service in our township.
- We provide facilities to the American Red Cross and the Southern Shores District Boy Scouts of America for the conduct of First Aid, CPR and AED training.
- The post regularly makes contributes to the Salvation Army, to support Homeless Veterans and their families.
- We make contributions for cancer research.
- The post contributes to the VFW National Home providing shelter, support and education to the spouses and orphans of deceased service members.
- Our local high school is supported by our post in providing facilities for their sports teams to conduct fund raising steak fries.
- We sponsor the VFW Voice of Democracy Program for our high school students, and the Patriot's Pen program for area middle schools.

- In cooperation with the schools both our post and the auxiliary adopt families within the community identified as “at need” each year at Christmas.
- The post provides military funeral services for our fallen veterans and services members throughout the county, which precludes the Michigan National Guard from having to expend state resources to dispatch guard personnel to perform such services.
- And we provide recreational and moral support activities at the Ann Arbor Veterans Hospital for veterans undergoing treatment.

These are but a few of the activities of Post 4093. All of these activities and services cost money and expend resources of our members.

Like many VFW Post within my District and the Department of Michigan, we are a small post. In order to finance these activities and services we draw our financial resources from: Hall Rentals, Monthly Steak Fries, weekly Bingo and the occasional Millionaire Poker events. Like many VFW Posts, we do not maintain and operate a bar in which to obtain income, therefore you can see that our income resource abilities are somewhat limited.

As of February 6, 2016 our post has a membership of only 198 members. While we are constantly recruiting new members to fill our ranks as we lose WWII and Korean War members. The majority of our members are now Viet Nam veterans. These veterans are now in their 60's and because of increasing health issues lessens our manpower resources. Only about 15% of our total memberships are currently active with the ability to serve in our fund raising operations.

The current charity gaming regulations requiring 3 members of the organization to be present during Millionaire Poker events severely taxes the available manpower resources, limiting or diminishing our charitable gaming opportunities. This places an unnecessary burden upon our post the very organization that provides such needed services in our community.

If SB187 is not passed, all of the programs and activities sponsored by VFW Post 4093 and many other VFW Post will be forced to be diminished or eliminated.

The current requirements are burdensome, completely arbitrary and unnecessary. Therefore I implore this committee to fully support SB187 so that our organizations can continue to provide the support not only to our veterans and service personnel, but also to the youth and senior citizens of our community.

I am now willing to entertain any questions you may have.

Thank you.